**Educators Making Portfolios**   
*First Results from the National School Reform Faculty*   
**by Kathleen Cushman**   
[Phi Delta Kappan,](http://www.pdkintl.org/kappan/kappan.htm) June 1999

**Assembling the Portfolio**  
  
**RAWING** on the experiences she had in preparing two professional portfolios, Susan Howard-Bubacz of New York City's Community School District 10 came up with the following suggestions:



**1.** **Begin with a goal or standard** describing an aspect of good teaching that you have become aware of from your discussions with colleagues. Write out the steps you will take toward reaching it.

**2.** **Think about benchmarks.** What will serve as evidence of your progress toward the goal or standard?  
**3.** **Collect artifacts.** As you work, document your efforts. Save teaching notes, lesson plans, student work, journal entries, photos, videotapes, letters, written recommendations, awards, and memos. This collection is your working portfolio.

**4.** **Refer back** to your original goal or standard regularly. Check your progress and make changes when appropriate.

**5.** **Sort, catalogue, and reflect** on your artifacts. Write a description of each item and explain how it gives evidence of your progress or process. Reflect on your progress: What was successful? What challenges came up?

**6.** **Write an introduction** to your portfolio. Describe the setting and your rationale for the project. Discuss concerns you held at the outset and outline the goal or standard you hoped to achieve.

**7.** **Write some reflections about the process.** Think about the work's impact on you, on your students, and on your school culture.

**8.** **Assemble your portfolio.** Create a table of contents.

**9.** **Present your portfolio** to colleagues for feedback.

**How (Really) to Assemble Your Portfolio**   
*One Teacher's Private Diary*   
by Peggy Silva, Souhegan High School, Amherst, New Hampshire   
  
**HIS** Thanksgiving weekend is my self-imposed deadline of putting together my professional portfolio. (Hmm, are there "amateur portfolios"?) No problem--I have a carton of "stuff"; all I have to do is assemble it into a coherent narrative, hole-punch everything, write an intro and a conclusion, and be done with it. I am a writer; I have never missed a deadline; I work well under pressure; this is pressure. I will succeed. Perhaps my process could help my colleagues who are not writers; I will document it to serve as a model for others in my Critical Friends Group:



**1.** First, empty every desk drawer and file folder into a cardboard box.

**2.** Empty box on dining room table and make plans to eat out on Thanksgiving.  
**3.** Talk a lot about how busy you will be assembling your portfolio on Thanksgiving weekend. You will impress your friends with your diligence.

**4.** Friday morning. Set alarm, get up early; watch the Today show to get caught up on world news and holiday shopping tips. Get dressed and make bed while watching Regis and Kathy Lee. Straighten living room while watching Rosie O'Donnell. Okay, that's it; get thee to the dining room.

**5.** Go through "stuff." It's now become "data." There is no logic to the piles. Take a break.  
**6.** Make an angel food cake--the first cake you've made in about two years.

**7.** Sort "data" into meaningful piles. Make popcorn. Watch "The Young and the Restless" and "The Bold and the Beautiful." Fortunately "As the World Turns" has been canceled because of football. Hole-punch data.

**8.** Arrange data chronologically. Make notes: How will this data meet your stated needs? Dial Jen's number; hang up. This is a holiday weekend; do not bother your coach with your concerns.

**9.** Go to Wal-Mart to buy socks on the day after Thanksgiving, the busiest shopping day of the year, even though you pride yourself on never setting foot in Wal-Mart. Convince yourself that you need a binder to hold your portfolio. Buy three binders in assorted sizes. Do not notice until you get home that none of them works properly.

**10.** Rent movie, "Big Night." Get wrapping paper, one color for each member of your family, and wrap all Christmas presents while watching film.

**11.** Make soup from the carcass of the turkey you made on Wednesday to compensate for the fact that you were going out to dinner on Thanksgiving. Make homemade fudge frosting for angel food cake. Throw in a couple of loads of wash.  
**12.** Tell husband that you are exhausted from doing your portfolio all day.